

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

CHECK IN

Find a golden glow in Cooperstown

By Janet Mendelsohn
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

"Glimmerglass" is what James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), the country's first major novelist, named Otsego Lake in his "Leatherstocking Tales." The tranquil, shimmering body of water is framed by forested mountains. It's backdrop and focal point for everything at the Otesaga, a Gilded Age hotel built in 1909. Through an imposing front entrance with massive white columns, you enter an expansive carpeted lobby. At the far end, glass doors open to rows of rocking chairs on a broad veranda with stately pillars. Choose a chair. Unwind and savor the view from this gracious but casual hotel.

BED AND BATH

Our Queen Standard Room overlooked an attractive, generously sized outdoor pool, 18-hole Leatherstocking Golf Course, and Otsego Lake. Although a bit smaller than we expected for the price, the room was tasteful, traditional, and comfy. The bed had crisp white linens and loads of fluffy pillows and was luxurious yet firm enough for a good night's sleep. There was a small desk, single bureau, formal draperies, and a large flat-screen TV. The roomy modern bathroom had thick towels and a shower with excellent water pressure.

DINING

Room rates include a lavish breakfast buffet (7-10 a.m.), enjoyed indoors or on the veranda at tables set with fresh flowers and Villeroy & Boch fine china. On Sundays (11 a.m.-2 p.m.) for an additional charge, there's a full brunch, but we felt no need.

For lunch and dinner, most guests gravitated to the informal Hawkeye Grill. Flavorful burgers came speared with a steak knife. Roast chicken was moist and meaty, the salads were crisp, and the bar was full. In Glimmerglass, the main dining room, a sedate crowd seemed to enjoy updated classic American cuisine.

AT THE HOTEL

Hawkeye Spa (9 a.m.-6 p.m.) offers a range of massage, facial, and invigorating treatments. Two all-weather tennis courts are across the street. In addition to the golf course and driving range, options include canoe, rowboat, paddleboard, and bike rentals; fishing (equipment provided; a state fishing license required for ages 16 and older); and an outdoor pool and lake swimming. On holiday weekends, especially for kids, there are trivia contests, balloon animals,



JANET MENDELSON FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

and lawn games.

Night life is quiet. After dinner, head for the 24-seat Fire Bar under the stars. Indoors there's live music and dancing in the Templeton Lounge Thursday through Saturday.

AROUND COOPERSTOWN

This pretty town is the legendary home of baseball. Classic white clapboard houses abound although blocks of retail emphasize baseball souvenirs.

Spend an hour or more in the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum and see the plaque honoring 2015 inductee Pedro Martinez.

But there's more here than America's Game. Take a one-hour lake tour by boat. Step inside the hip Cooperstown Beverage Exchange (75 Main St.) which transforms nightly from retail venue to cocktail lounge featuring local craft beers, spirits, ciders, and wines from producers on the Cooperstown Beverage Trail. On a country drive, visit on the trail or go to Glimmerglass State Park for a picnic and swimming. Fenimore Art Museum has fine collections of American landscape paintings and Native American art in an elegant 1930s neo-Georgian lakefront mansion. We also loved the Farmer's Museum, a re-created 19th-century farming community

with two engaging add-ons: exhibits of 21st-century agriculture in the state and the charming Empire State Carousel. In summer, opera lovers converge for the annual Glimmerglass Festival.

THE OTESAGA HOTEL 60 Lake St., Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-9931, www.otesaga.com. Rates from \$299 (queen standard) to \$400 (suite) and up. Closes after Thanksgiving to mid-April.

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HERE

PATS PEAK'S FREE SKIS FOR ADULT BEGINNERS

Learn how to carve your way down the slopes and get a free pair of skis through a new program at Pats Peak Ski Area in southern New Hampshire. The Passport Program Plus, available to beginner skiers 18 and older, includes four lift tickets, lessons, and rental packages, which are valid anytime during the 2015-16 season. Once you complete the program, you will receive a free Pats Peak Unlimited Season Pass and 50 percent off group lessons for the rest of the ski season, a free pair of Elan skis and bindings (limited to the first 150 people who sign up), and additional discounts to ski shops. Freebie skis are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Sign up online. \$349. 888-728-7732, www.patspeak.com

VERMONT INN'S FARM-TO-MASSAGE-TABLE MENU

The Essex in northern Vermont has added all-natural product lines in its spa, and launched new culinary-inspired body treatments and a special Spa Escape package. The Body Brew and Coffee Almond Detox treatments, for instance, incorporate hops grown in the resort's gardens and exfoliating scrubs made from the state's Green Mountain Coffee. Guests can swing by the hotel lobby

Thursdays at 4 p.m. to enjoy a chair massage, make healthy smoothies or homemade body scrubs, or get a mineral make-up application. Package rates: \$699 for two people midweek, \$749 weekends, includes two night's accommodations, \$200 spa credit per person, full spa access, and spa lunch for two daily. 800-727-4295, www.essexresortspa.com

THERE

THRILLS AND CHILL FOR THIS CALIFORNIA HOTEL STAY

Spend two hours screaming around a racetrack behind the wheel of a BMW, and then find

your inner calm at a spa, in a pool, or on the golf course of a nearby luxury hotel. The Hyatt Regency Indian Wells Resort & Spa in Southern California offers its BMW Rush and Relaxation package through Dec. 31. Guests can drive several BMW race cars around a track (pictured at right) at the new 32-acre BMW Performance Driving School, learning how to handle the cars like pros. Then they can return to the hotel for a dip in the pool, relaxing spa treatment, or round of golf on the 36-hole course. Rates: \$792 for two drivers, includes one night's accommodations and breakfast for two, and a two-hour drive per person. Book the



package at least 72 hours in advance; some blackout dates apply. 760-776-1234, www.indianwells.hyatt.com

VIEW THE NORTHERN LIGHTS IN FROZEN SWEDEN

See the northern lights while staying in a traditional ice-fish-

ing hut on the banks of a frozen lake in Sweden. Off the Map Travel has launched its Aurora Village overnight experience, when guests stay in an insulated ice-fishing hut overlooking Lake Badsjön, far from any light pollution. Reach your cozy hut by snowmobile or snowshoe from your base in nearby Björkliden, an arctic area of Swedish Lapland, and spend an evening watching the northern lights. Your guide will bring hot breakfast in the morning. The four-night trip includes a stay in Björkliden and Abisko, where you can go dogsledding and snowmobiling, and learn how to photograph the broad bands of light. Age 4 and older \$2,150 per person, includes all meals, accommodations in a four-star hotel and ice hut, and activities; flights not included. 011-44-800-566-8901, www.ilovenorthernlights.com

EVERYWHERE

STYLISH AND SLIM HEADSET KEEPS YOU CONNECTED

Stay connected to people while hands-free with the tiny new Jabra Eclipse, an in-ear wireless headset with superb sound quality and a nice low profile. The headset, which weighs just 5.5 grams, blocks out back-

ground noise and stays comfortable all day — so much so, you are likely to forget it's there. It nestles into a storage case that also serves as a portable charger, so you can easily refuel the headset on the go. The Eclipse offers up to 10 hours of talk time on a single battery charge. Look for it in Best Buy and T-Mobile stores. Retail for \$129.99. 800-929-8209, www.jabra.com

COMPACT CHARGER FOR YOUR GLOBAL TRAVELS



Ventev's clever new Global Charging Hub 300 makes it easy to charge three devices at once while traveling anywhere in the world. The compact, lightweight device has one 2.5-amp AC outlet and two 2.1-amp shared USB ports, so you can power and charge your smartphone, tablet, and other portable devices. It also has four different AC prong configurations nestled in the device that enable you to use wall outlets in more than 150 countries. Engage each plug individually using sliders on the side of the device, and release each one to store it again using a simple button on the other side. Get Ventev's handy 6-inch micro USB or Apple Lightning cables so you don't have to pack umpteen inches of excess cords in your bag. \$34.99 (charging hub 300); \$12.99-\$22.99 (cables). www.ventev.com

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